THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes. The UK amended immigration laws for Highly-Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP) visa holders in 2006 and has launched a point-based system for foreign workers in 2008.

(b) No.

(c) Yes. The issue has been taken up in bilateral discussions with the UK authorities.

(d) The UK Government have launched a new comprehensive point-based system for foreign workers with the first stage of the system becoming operational on 29 February 2008. The system is to be introduced in stages to streamline more than 80 existing routes of entry into 5 broad categories for non-EU workers. Each of the 5 tiers will have different conditions, entitlements and entry clearance checks. As a first stage, Tier-1 for highly skilled workers will replace the erstwhile HSMP, and has been implemented in India from 1st April 2008. Other tiers will be implemented between the autumn 2008 and spring 2009.

(e) The HSMP visa issue have been taken up through the Indian High Commission in the UK. The Government have no record of petitions/representations filed by the Indian immigrants to the UK authorities.

International conference for expanding United Nations

†707.SHRI MANOHAR JOSHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an international conference is likely to be held in September next year in India;

(b) if so, the aim of that conference;

(c) whether the conference would include all those countries who want expansion of the United Nations; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Government do not propose to convene an international conference in India on the subject of expansion of the United Nations.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Steps for expanding UNSC

†708.SHRI MANOHAR JOSHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state the steps taken as well as proposed to be taken in the near future to expedite expansion of the United Nations Security Council?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): The expansion of the Security Council is being discussed in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) where India is playing a major and proactive role. India will continue its efforts in forthcoming discussions in the UNGA.

Permanent membership for Security Council

709. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.